764 They dig a round hole, three feet deep, in a hut, so that it will be under cover. They bathe the body, redden it all over, anoint the hair with oil, and truss it up as carefully as for one of their great feasts. They wrap the deceased in a cotton hammock and then put him in the hole in nearly the same posture as the child is in the womb of his mother, not upside down nor with the face against the ground, but straight, the feet below, the head up and resting on the knees. They then cover the hole with a board. That done, the women sit around the grave on their heels and cry, while their husbands clasp them with the left hand and stroke their arm with the right hand as if to lessen the pain. All the women strike up a lugubrious song punctuated with sighs and cries. While lamenting they throw dirt in the hole with their hands and then build a fire over it. They burn the dead man's old clothes or give them away. If the deceased had slaves, they kill them—but the slaves usually run away, and they are not chased.

765 The children of the deceased or his wife cut their hair in sign of mourning. They also fast one or two [737] months. When Father Raymond asked them if their fast did the dead any good, they said no, but that those who did not fast would age quicker because of it, or would not have a firm footing, would not see the fish in the water, or would be surprised by their enemies. These reasons seem pertinent even to the aged.

If one of the relatives is unable to attend the funeral, he comes to visit the grave and weeps there with the parents of the deceased. When they believe the body is decomposed, they again assemble at the tomb, and weep and trample over the grave. On the anniversary of the death they come to drown their melancholy and the memory of the deceased in an abyss of ouicou.

775 Otherwise concerning the soul after death, they have the notion that each man has three souls. One in his head, which is felt beating at the temples; another in the arms, which manifests itself in the pulse; and the other in the heart, which makes its movement strongly felt.

The soul of the heart goes directly to heaven to be blessedly happy, although they are unable to say just what this felicity consists in. The soul of the arm and of the head becomes maboya, that is, an evil spirit which torments them. They fear the maboya extremely,

right to do it. They apologize for not having been accustomed to doing it, and they have borrowed our word for prayer, apourieroutouni, but have added the ending of their verb and noun. [433] When lizards, animals, or birds accidentally perch on their houses or near by, as if they were tame, they do not dare to touch them. They say that these are birds which belong to the gods of the boyes, and if the Caribs killed these animals the gods would kill them in turn. [341]

The maboyas are evil spirits. The Caribs have no knowledge of the creation nor of the end of the world, nor of angels nor devils. They fear the maboyas, however, and the oumécou about whom they have told me stories which I consider fables. When I tried to make them understand who the devil was, I called him maboya in order that they would firmly believe what I told them, since they have so much hatred for maboyas. [424]

It has been wrongly said that two Caribs taken to France had renounced their faith. One of these obtained permission to visit his parents and he died there a little while after his return. The other one requested me to live near him until his death, offering to feed me and to have a chapel built for me. [380]

If death is terrible to other men, I have seen that among the Caribs it seems more than terrible. It is so among those who have a conscience filled with remorse over the evil that they know they have done. For, believing in the immortality of the soul, they are fearful of the punishments which might confront them according to their faults. No one can console them at this time. They die with strange grieving and with bitterness of heart. As soon as they are dead, they are painted red, their hair is arranged, and they are wrapped in a good cotton hammock -- if they are important. They then make a round hole in the middle of the house at a depth suitable to the posture that they have given them, which is the posture they had in the womb of their mother. They lower them into the hole, placing them on a plank which has been put there and cover them with another on which they throw the dirt. They shed tears and sing sadly of their sorrow and their regret. This continues late at night and at dawn for a number of days. They don't forget the custom of putting bread and wine upon the grave, nor that of maintaining a fire around the grave for a long time. At the end of a year they return to weep, and lifting up the planks they throw earth on the consumed corpse. They trample down the earth and drink the rest of the day and night. Sometimes they move out of their houses and habitations, as I have seen them do after the death of their captain, Henri Comte. [237]

302 soft and it could not be shaped in this way, they are supposed to be ugly. Both men and women let their hair grow long and tie it neatly behind their head when they go out. In their drinking parties they [301] wear long and beautiful feathers of the Aras bird or the Festu en Queue in their hair. They surround these feathers with a very handsome crown of other feathers. [92]

●305 They women cut their hair upon the death of their husbands, and husbands cut their hair upon the death of their wives. The children cut their hair upon the death of their father or mother. The hair is [547] cut for the period of a year. The slaves have their hair cut all the time and are never allowed to let their hair grow. [319] They have their hair cut to the neck which means they are in mourning. [458]

301 They climb along a cliff with a small ledge in order to catch the Festu en Queue, so called because it has only one feather at the tail, beautiful and long, which they stick into their hair and of which they are very proud. [88] To bind their hair they use a ribbon or braid which they make themselves with cotton thread and the thorn of a palmetto, which serves as a needle. This ribbon is very strong when it is completed and tied at the end. When it is slack at the end it frays. The ends are decorated with two tufts and over these are two thimbles which decorate and embellish them. [230]

302 A great insult which the women commonly say to their children is "wavy hair," because of the trouble they have when they comb their hair for them. To avoid difficulty they use oils throughout the youth of their children to make the hair thicker and to allow the comb to pass more easily through it. I have seen a mother who took fresh manioc flour with which she covered the head of a child and let it dry and become sticky. I don't know if this helped. [155]

They take a sliver out of a stem of a certain plant which they bend to shave the temples of the head and the eyelashes after having dampened them with manioc water. [366]

301 The ornaments of the men are of caracoli, as well as garters and bracelets of glass beads four fingers wide which they wear on their wrists and at the biceps of the arm. They also wear thimbles, small bells, and necklaces of jaguar teeth. When they catch cats, they never spare them but take their teeth and make smaller necklaces out of them. The women also appreciate green stones, caracoli, and glass beads,

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
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his widow assured me that it was useless for me to try to save their 754
10-year-old daughter, as the child had fallen under the same spell as the father, and had been sick ever since the latter's death. The girl was well grown, but very thin, and had swellings on neck and shoulders. She said her whole body hurt her. At the time I last saw her alive she kept vomiting a light colorless froth, and had a very quick pulse and normal temperature. At her own request I procured eggs and milk for her, and sent for the doctor on my own responsibility. But the message was either distorted or misunderstood, for the doctor neither sent any word nor put in an appearance; and when, 5 days later, the girl died, she was buried without a certificate, as is customary in the reserve. If, as is probable, it was a case of tubercular meningitis, an immediate operation might have saved the child's life.

Death is announced as soon as it takes place by a single protracted 764
blast of the conque shell (*corne lambi*). Law and hygiene demand [765]
that burial take place within 24 hours (though Labat records having seen the body of a Carib dead several months and perfectly preserved through the use of *rocou*, *Bixa orellana*), but this is preceded, whenever possible, by a wake to which all and sundry come to make pigs of themselves on the rum provided. When the last "grog" is drunk and the coffin—made on the spot by some of the men present—nailed down, a procession is formed to conduct the corpse to the little cemetery of Sainte Marie, the last home of the last Antilleans. The reading of a French prayer by some old woman more literate than the rest, the tolling of a cracked bell, and the coffin is bestowed in a hastily dug grave almost within reach of the Atlantic waves. Burial in the foetal posture under the floor of the karbé was suppressed by the priests some 70 years ago. The depth of the grave as dug today is supposed to be equal to the length of the body.

Eight days after the burial a sort of second wake is held in the house 765
where the deceased died. In the event of this not having been his or her usual abode, two wakes, or "prières," as they are called, are held. The deathbed is decorated with white flowers, candles, and objects having belonged to the dead man or woman. Until midnight women and girls sit around a table and sing French canticques, while men and boys wander about, chatting and drinking. Fires are then lighted outside the house and cocoa and cassava bread prepared and offered to those present. At this time the girls usually pair off with the boys and disappear into the bushes, while the older men and women sit round the fire drinking rum and telling tales and cumundrums. Sometimes a sort of ronde, or Reigen, is danced around the fire before the dispersal at daybreak. The meaning and object of this ceremony [776]
seems to be a kind of spiritual fumigation to rid the house of the now nefarious spirit of the new dead, which continues to lurk there after burial, as perhaps also of the evil powers that caused the death.

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
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765 The belief in the "uncanny" quality of the newly dead as well as of the newborn and yet unnamed child is very widespread. Whatever its origin, the local priests condemn this ceremony; and several have assured me that there is nothing in the Christian religion to justify it.

526 Until recent years a type of wrestling was much practiced by the Dominica Caribs whenever they were drunk or quarrelsome. I have never witnessed it personally, but from the accounts of all those who have, it seems to have been more in the nature of a sporting contest than of an aggressive attack.

Childhood: Games and Pastimes

018 Fred Ober wrote of the Carib children of Dominica in 1877 that they should be the happiest on earth because of their freedom to play and wander naked among rocks and river pools. Perhaps. But children the world over are usually happy as long as they are well, and rarely appreciate relative advantages or disadvantages. The street urchin of our own lands takes the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" as much for granted as does the pampered darling of wealthy parents his movies, candy, and other luxuries.

291 177 One may still find Carib youngsters clothed as nature made them running around and about their homes. This does not mean that they never wear clothes, but merely that dressing is to them what dressing up is to our children. The school has come to Salybia since Ober's time, and although few of the present generation of young Caribs have learned anything of value to them there, they have come to regard the everyday use of clothes and shoes together with the talking of broken English as marks of especial superiority. Can we blame them? The Negro policemen who have established themselves in the reserve despite Carib protest, the Negro storekeeper in Marigot where they run errands for their parents, their own Negro schoolmaster—they all do these things, and who shall deny that such august personages are their Carib elders' superiors in authority, wealth, and knowledge of the world?

355 Undemonstrative as they are, the Caribs show a great deal of affection for their children, and an almost equal reluctance to discipline or punish them. In consequence, the children do pretty much as they please, and neither eat, sleep, nor bathe at regular hours; but get their whack of coffee, rum, or whatever else is going. Like other young people brought up in the tropics, they seem apathetic when compared with those of northern climes, and will often sit quiet and idle in a corner for hours rather than bestir themselves to go out and play.

357 Even their games are usually of a sedentary order. In "pick-up," a game common to several parts of the world, the players squat opposite

8: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1950
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they still eat no fish or fowl—unless it be crabs, and these must be female—so long as their children remain feeble and weakly. . . . Otherwise, he said, the children would have stomach-ache, or else bodily deformations resembling the animals that their fathers had eaten.[3]

Further details are given by du Tertre and by La Borde.[4] For a first-born male child, the father's retreat lasted three months; for other births, only five or six days; and during this period, he lived in a separate building and avoided those who were leading a normal life. But for six months after the birth of any child of his, he had to abstain from eating the flesh of certain animals. The mother also fasted for some—du Tertre says forty—days, drinking only warmed water, and eating dry cassava. On no account, says La Borde, must she eat female crabs. The child was bathed immediately after birth; and, so that it should not catch cold if this took place at night, all the men in the carbet got up and went out to bathe also.

When a death occurred:

The children of the deceased or his wife cut their hair in sign of mourning. *They also fast for one or two months.* Father Raymond (Breton) asked them whether this fast helped the dead in any way, and they said: no; but that those who did not fast *would grow old sooner, be unsure of foot* and unable to see fish in the water, and that they would be liable to surprise by their enemies.[5]

Similarly:

When girls begin to have their flowers, they make them *fast for one or two months;* as also the boys, when these attain their adolescence; and they have them scarified with aguti-teeth.[6]

According to La Borde, if a Carib were wounded when away from home, he would send immediately to tell the members of his family, so that these might not, by continuing their normal diet and activities, become the involuntary cause of aggravating his affliction. It may be gathered, moreover, that they were not always disposed to co-operate fully in this matter; for we are told that:

The kin never, or but very rarely, visit their sick; and married (*du Tertre says:* newly married) people generally do not go at all, because, they say, *there emanates from their body a principle which afflicts the sick person the more.* For this reason, when one of the Baron's sons was sick, neither his brothers nor his sisters nor his father went to see him; *only his mother looked after him, and she kept away from the father.*[7]

We are also told that fasting was a prerequisite for the would-be *buiei* or shaman, and for candidates for chieftaincy.

[3] *Je* Renard, 1929, pp. 59–60.
[4] du Tertre, 1667–71, vol. II, p. 412; La Borde, *in* Hennepin, 1704, pp. 587–593.
[5] Armand de la Paix, *in* Renard, 1929, pp. 73–73.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 61. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

12: Taylor E-5 (ca. 1930-1937)1949
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plained of pains, went to a separate hut, and lay in a hammock."[38] Breton has answered this last statement by saying: "it is not likely that the husband should cry out like a woman in labour; on the contrary, I've seen them come from without, secretly and stealthily, a month after the birth, in order to make their retreat and fast."[39] This is, at least, more in accordance with all modern reports of the custom. Moreover, it is disconcerting if not misleading to insist upon the "otherness" of the father's part, after rightly noting that the restrictions affected both parents; especially since precautions similar to those characterizing the Carib's "couvade" were also taken at puberty, after the death of a relative or the slaying of an enemy, and by candidates for chieftaincy or shamanship. Breton nowhere mentions any special taboo on the names of the dead, while la Borde merely says that they were avoided so as not to evoke thoughts of death. The former does say, however, that names were not used as forms of address to any but children; and that everybody's real name was kept secret from all but intimates. And, while Breton mentions that his wife was the only woman who might eat with a man, his failure to report that even this was limited to the occasion of their marriage suggests that there was no hard and fast rule about such matters. A summary cannot include everything; but the studied omissions or contradictions of a man like Breton, who had read, before publishing his own work, the accounts of Armand de la Paix, du Puis, du Tertre, and Rochefort—all of whom had sought and obtained his advice and help—cannot well be ignored. My own article on the *Kinship and Social Structure of the Island Carib* resumés some of these points at greater length.[40]

Perhaps the most unsatisfactory part of the whole summary of Carib culture is the section on "Religion and Shamanism,"[41] which perpetuates the myth that the Carib invoked and made offerings to "the evil spirits (maboya)." Already Breton protested (and in the matter of religion, at least, he cannot be accused of prejudice in the Caribs' favor) that "There is in the belief of the Savages as much difference between Ichôiri & Mápoya as between God & devil among ourselves; and it is unheard of among them that any one should offer sacrifices to mápoya,"[42] while la Borde notes: "Ils craignent Máboia, mais ils ne lui rendent aucun culte." Thirty-five years ago Roth, in his *Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians*, argued conclusively against this somewhat mischievous concep-

38 *Ibid.*
39 Breton, *op. cit.*, pp. 373-374.
40 Taylor, *Kinship and Social Structure; Carib Folk Beliefs.*
41 *Handbook*, pp. 561-563.
42 Breton, *Dictionnaire Caraïbe-Français*, pp. 283-284.